



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



A RIDE TO REMEMBER, A RIDE THAT SUPPORTS OUR HEROES

Veterans at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home welcomed the riders participating in the 10th Annual Fall River Freedom Ride Poker Run. The rumble, the roar, the chrome and the leather did not out shine the red, white and blue present Sunday as the poker run kicked off.

With 122 motorcycles and 175 riders, the ride has been deemed a success.

Not only were participants from South Dakota, but they were also from Germany, South Carolina, Florida, Texas and Nebraska.

Special thanks to all that participated, organized and supported this wonderful event. The monies contributed assist the residents with some of their off-site travel events.

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Freedom

ELLSWORTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED

The South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority has been named the 2012 Defense Community of the Year, and Gov. Dennis Daugaard accepted the award on behalf of the Authority on Monday, Aug. 6, in Monterey, Calif.

With cuts looming to the federal Department of Defense budget and the potential for another round of Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC), Gov. Daugaard has



**Ellsworth Development
Authority**

made Ellsworth's long-term viability a top priority. The Governor is working with the Authority, the Ellsworth Task Force and others to complete projects on and around the base that will help ensure Ellsworth remains a valuable asset to the U.S. military.

The Defense Community of the Year award comes from the Association of Defense Communities, an organization representing communities and states with a significant military presence. The award recognizes a community or organization whose partnerships with a military installation have enhanced its value and the community's overall economic development.

"I congratulate the Ellsworth Development Authority for achieving this honor," Gov. Daugaard said. "Its hard work over the last three years has demonstrated our active interest in securing the future of one of South Dakota's key assets – Ellsworth Air Force Base."

The Authority, formed by the 2009 South Dakota Legislature, has worked to reduce encroachments around Ellsworth and improve the base's efficiency. In addition to using excess Air Force land to develop a commercial area for retail and light industrial uses, it has purchased, designed and is constructing a multi-use development to house residents and businesses currently incompatible with the air base.

The Authority donated 20 acres of land to the Douglas School District for a new elementary school and is working with local communities to strengthen zoning and overlay districts to reduce future encroachment. In addition, the Authority is building a regional wastewater treatment plant that will serve both Ellsworth and the city of Box Elder, saving the U.S. Air Force an estimated \$8 million.

Terry Yonkers, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, said the Ellsworth Development Authority is a "great example" of effective partnerships among the air base, local communities and the state.

Current members of the South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority are: Stanley Porch, Wanblee; Mark Roby, Watertown; Patrick Burchill, Rapid City; Bob Sutton, Pierre; Michael Bender, Sioux Falls; Kenneth McNenny, Sturgis; and Kent Mundon, Rapid City.



SOUTH DAKOTA HONORS VETERANS WITH PURPLE HEART MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

The South Dakota Transportation Commission officially designated Interstate 90, from the Wyoming border to the Minnesota border, as the Purple Heart Memorial Highway during a dedication ceremony at the Valley Springs and Spearfish rest areas along the interstate, Tuesday, Aug. 7. South Dakota is among 46 states and Guam to name parts of their roads in honor of Purple Heart recipients.

"It seems like a small token of appreciation in comparison of what has been given by those that we are honoring," said Darin Bergquist, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Transportation. "I am hopeful that as people travel Interstate 90 in South Dakota they will see the sign and be reminded to take a minute to remember, to reflect and thank those that have been awarded the Purple Heart for their service and sacrifices."

Several Purple Heart recipients attended the ceremony including Edwin Petranek, who earned four Purple Hearts during World War II; H. Marty Nelson who served in Korea; Doc Jackson and Jack Schooler who both served in Vietnam and Eric Jennings who served in Afghanistan.

"Having I-90 named the Purple Heart Memorial Highway is an honor," said South Dakota Army National Guardsman 1st Sgt. Eric Jennings, awarded the Purple Heart Nov. 1, 2004. "But what is truly an honor, is to stand next to these four other recipients from World War II, Korea and Vietnam."

The South Dakota National Guard has 42 service members who have received the United States military decoration within the past 10 years against the Global War on Terrorism. The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the president to those wounded or killed while serving on or after April 15, 1917.

"It has been estimated that 320,000 Purple Hearts were awarded during World War I, more than 1 million during World War II, 118,000 during the Korean War, 351,000 during the Vietnam War, more than 35,000 in Iraq and we are now approaching 10,000 in Afghanistan," said South Dakota National Guard's Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general. "This designation of the Purple Heart Memorial Highway here in South Dakota is a very simple way to honor the veterans who left their families, homes and communities to serve this great country in a time of war," said Reisch. "It is my hope that this marker will serve as a reminder of the price that has been paid for the many freedoms we often take for granted here in the United States."



FILING FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIMS

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hosted an event July 31 for ten veterans service organizations (VSO) to collaborate in the VA's effort to eliminate the claims backlog. The main focus of the workshop was the VA's emphasis on the shared goal of better serving veterans and positive impact of filing Fully Developed Claims (FDC). Participation in the FDC Program is completely optional, and allows for faster claims processing, while preserving a veteran's right to appeal a decision.

Claims are considered to be "fully developed" when veterans submit all available supporting evidence, like private treatment records and notice of Federal treatment records, to the VA at the time they first file a formal claim and certify they have no more evidence to submit. The VA gathers all Federal records the veterans identify, like those from VA Medical Centers and the Social Security Administration. The VA will also send the veterans for a VA medical examination, if needed. The early submittal of evidence and certification by the veteran allow the VA to start processing the claim immediately, without holding it for mandatory wait periods.



Veterans and their representatives do much of the development that typically takes the VA 175 days to gather. Currently, FDC claims take an average of 110 days to decide compared to 254 days through the traditional claims method.

Using the VA Form 21-526EZ, veterans can file FDC for disability compensation. The VA Form 21-527EZ allows veterans to file for a non-service connected pension. The FDC forms, found at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf> and <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-527EZ-ARE.pdf> include information on what evidence is the VA's responsibility and what evidence is the veteran's responsibility.

For more information on the Fully Developed Claims program, visit <http://benefits.va.gov/transformation/fastclaims/>.

We're all in to serve our Veterans.

Changing the way we work to
better support our Veterans,
their families and survivors.



FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIMS (CONTINUED)



fdc *Fully Developed Claims*

The Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Program is the fastest way of getting your compensation or pension claim processed. Participation in the FDC Program allows for faster claims processing while preserving great quality of service and your right to appeal a decision.

[Disability Benefits Questionnaires \(DBQ\)](#) help support the Fully Developed Claims Program. DBQs are valuable for claims processing because they provide medical information that is directly relevant to determining a disability rating. When submitted with a Fully Developed Claim, DBQs ensure the VA's ratings specialists have precisely the information they need to start processing the claim.

What Makes the FDC Program a Faster Process?

You know exactly what's needed

The FDC Program is unique because you will learn exactly what evidence you need to substantiate an eligible claim when you apply, without having to wait for further instructions.

No more waiting for further instructions

You gather all the evidence required

By participating in the FDC Program, you will send the required evidence with your claim and certify that you have nothing further to provide. By doing this, you dramatically reduce the processing time of your claim.

The application time is reduced

The VA has cleared the way

VA has shortened application forms to reduce paperwork and established priority channels to process your FDC claim. This means we are able to process these claims far more quickly than claims going through the traditional process.

We can process your claim quickly

Lock in an effective date with an Informal Claim



Upcoming Events

Aug. 15—Veterans Job Fair—Sioux Falls VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) 10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Annual Show and Shine—VA Sioux Falls (2501 W. 22nd Street)
Aug. 23—VABHHCS Stand Down—Rosebud/Mission
Aug. 27-29—VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre
Aug. 27—VABHHCS Stand Down—Rapid City
Aug. 29—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Stand Down—McLaughlin
Aug. 30—Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Stand Down—Eagle Butte
Aug. 30– Sept. 3—SD State Fair—Huron (Veterans Day—Aug. 30)
Sept. 11—Stand Down—Wagner National Guard Armory—610 E. SD HWY 46 (10:00 am—2:00 pm)
Sept. 14—Stand Down—Watertown
Sept. 21—Stand Down—Sioux Falls - VFW— 3601 S. Minnesota Ave. (9:00 am—3:00 pm)
Sept 21—POW MIA DAY
Sept. 25—Stand Down—Aberdeen Civic Center—203 S. Washington (2:00 pm—7:00 pm)
Sept. 25 Pierre Homeless Connect
Sept. 30—Gold Star Mothers Day
Oct. 19—SFVAHCS Women Veterans Conference—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre

VA BENEFITS REFERENCE MANUAL AVAILABLE ON LINE

The Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs has posted the 2012 “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors” manual on the VA website. Below is a link to the manual: http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp.



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

